

**WV NRCS Civil Rights Advisory Committee
FY 2004 2nd Quarterly Meeting
February 23, 2004**

Present:

**Carlos Cole, Civil Rights Advisory Committee Chairperson
Larry Sargent, Human Resources Manager
Charlotte Wertz, State Administrative Officer
Isaac Wolford, Disability Emphasis Program Manager
Brian Lee, General Member from the State Office
Wanda Smith, Federal Women's Program Manager
Casey Shrader, Hispanic Program Manager
Rebecca McCloud, General Member from the East Area
Vickie Scott, American Indian/Alaskan Native Program Manager
Lillian Woods, State Conservationist
Rex Gardner, General Member from the West Area
James Dodson, Black Emphasis Program Manager
Leslie Sears, General Member from the South Area**

1:15 p. m. The WV NRCS Civil Right Advisory Committee meeting was called to order by chairperson Carlos Cole, in the Water Resources Conference Room on the 2nd floor of the Harley O. Staggers building (location of the NRCS State Office) in Morgantown, WV.

Wanda Smith read a draft of the minutes of the July 30, 2003 meeting, including the content of two (2) letters to the CRAC from State Conservationist Lillian Woods dated June 13, 2003, and July 30, 2003. These two letters had not been made available to the full committee prior to February 23, 2004. Ms. Smith requested that approval of these minutes be postponed until after the full committee has received a complete draft to review.

Introductions were made for the benefit of the new General Members.

State Conservationist Lillian Woods addressed the committee. She spoke about the priority placed on the training "Civil Rights Compliance in Program Delivery" scheduled for February 24 – 26, 2004. Civil Rights Committee members will be utilizing this training to fulfill their duties during upcoming Civil Rights Compliance Reviews.

Ms. Woods has reviewed the revised draft By-Laws, and these are ready to prepare

for her signature.

The next Principal Staff/Program Managers meeting will be around March 23, 2004.

Isaac Wolford distributed and discussed handouts used during his report to the Principal Staff and his presentation at the South Area staff meeting, both in December, 2003. These were “Disability Employment Program Update” and “Building and Site Accessibility General Information”.

SF 256 is a form to be sent out every 3-5 years, for employees to voluntarily declare disability. West Virginia NRCS is overdue – the last one was 7-8 years ago. Human Resources staff is to send out the SF 256s. These are good to have a backup documentation.

No new positions can be created to solve a reasonable accommodations request.

Most requests for Computer Accommodations Program (CAP) can be handled through the USDA TARGET Center.

Office Accessibility is an integral part of Reviews. The NRCS checklist will be used.

Lillian Woods stated that there is a new National FAC and a new Office Accessibility Checklist.

In the Disability Poster Contest, a glitch occurred, and we did not end up with posters. The 2004 poster was designed by an individual in the agency, to the tune of a \$250 Spot Award, for a design used nationally.

A Full Time National Disability Program Manager has been approved.

Casey Shrader reported that former Hispanic Emphasis Program Manager Walt Salamanca had delivered 10 boxes of materials to him.

Mr. Shrader had talked with Alan Harris about a Civil Rights webpage. As HEPM he has Hispanic Cultural and Heritage information available about 2-3 times per quarter.

District Conservationist Mike Marks is involved with a Career Day at Marshall University. SEPM’s may be interested. Marshall does not have Agriculture, but does have Biology, Chemistry, and Environmental Studies. Good recruiting opportunity in May.

Wanda Smith reported that she plans to interview several women in NRCS and publish their bios as a Federal Women’s Program project.

Ms. Smith reported that an initial analysis of the state training plan appeared to be unfavorable for women employees, but that she would need access to the training requests to make an unbiased analysis. State Conservationist Lillian Woods instructed Charlotte Wertz to schedule a meeting with Ms. Smith to go over the training requests. This is to be done without disclosing employee names, only Race, Sex, and National Origin.

I-CAMS will no longer be used for training request submittal.

James Dodson reported on Black History Month activities. Mr. Dodson spoke about the presentation by Ed Biggers. He will be participating in upcoming Field Office Reviews in the South Area. He plans on starting a library for the Black Emphasis Program. He attended training in December. He has a national BEPM teleconference upcoming on March 24.

Vicki Scott reported about the Native American library – Noah Mullins is to bring the library to her.

Charlotte Wertz reported that they plan to send the new SEPM's to DC in May for a training put on by the USDA Grad School.

Carlos Cole reported that the discretionary budget has not yet been received.

James Dodson questioned whether the Black Emphasis Program library should be kept at the state office, and was answered that he needed to keep the library at his office.

Peg Reece requested that the committee take a break and assemble outside the Harley O. Staggers building for a photograph.

On returning to the meeting room, Charlotte Wertz discussed the training scheduled for the committee for February 24 – 26, 2004, "Civil Rights Compliance in Program Delivery". This training will prepare committee members to perform Civil Rights Reviews. These reviews were last done when Rich Sims was Assistant State Conservationist.

Both Casey Shrader and Wanda Smith have direction from their National SEPM's that the DN-714 reports are to be given to the SEPM's quarterly. These have not been provided to WV NRCS SEPM's.

State Conservationist Lillian Woods discussed a Business Plan for the CRAC. She presented two options. One would be to have Items in the WV NRCS Business Plan. A second option would be to have a stand-alone CRAC Business Plan. Once the discretionary budget is received, the State plan must be updated, and is due 30 days after receipt of the budget.

The Affirmative Employment Plan (AEP) needs to be started. The committee will set a date later.

Civil Rights Reviews were discussed.

Review of Awards was discussed.

Review of Training was discussed.

It was moved and seconded to submit two to three items for the FY 2004 Business Plan, and then work on a Long Range Plan for FY 2005 and beyond. Motion passed.

Potential items for inclusion in State Business Plan:

- 1. SEPM & CRAC will assist Larry Sargent develop Affirmative Employment Plan.**
- 2. CRAC will assist State Office and Area Offices doing Civil Rights Compliance Reviews.**
- 3. CRAC will review all training requests.**
- 4. CRAC will review awards nominations.**
- 5. New SEPM's will receive training.**
- 6. Subcommittee of CRAC to work on Civil Rights section of WV NRCS Website.**
- 7. CRAC review and update State Outreach Plan dated 1999.**

The CRAC By-Laws are approvable; need minor format changes prior to Lillian Woods' and Carlos Cole's signatures. Wanda Smith will work with Diane Doerr on the format changes.

March 11, 2004 @ 9:30 a.m. in the Water Resources Conference Room, Harley O. Staggers Building, Morgantown, was set for the CRAC to work with Larry Sargent on the Affirmative Employment Plan (AEP).

Civil Rights on the WV-NRCS website were discussed. Chairperson Carlos Cole appointed a subcommittee of Isaac Wolford, Wanda Smith, and Rebecca McCloud with Casey Shrader appointed as Chair. A report will be expected at the next quarterly meeting.

Casey Shrader requested that the SEPM's gather the information needed on the website. The subcommittee will do the layout. Mr. Shrader requested the information be sent to him by April 2. He is to send out an email as a reminder.

The next meeting was set for May 12, 2004, 10:00 a.m. as a teleconference. Carlos Cole will contact Roseanne Kennedy to set up the teleconference.

The Recruiting Team was discussed. Member will be selected soon. This team will brainstorm methods of placing individuals in positions we anticipate coming open in the next few years. CRAC will be involved in recruiting efforts. This team and plan are not a part of the AEP.

Casey will check his March schedule to see if he can attend the Principal Staff meeting.

Charlotte Wertz is responsible for sending out copies of the September 1, 1999 State Outreach Plan to the CRAC.

The status of the Senior Employment Program is to be addressed in the next meeting.

The SEPM's are to have Leonard take photographs for a Special Emphasis Programs poster, while they are in town for training this week.

The meeting adjourned at 3:47 p.m.